

US Medical Team for historic first round of Pediatric Heart Surgeries in Guyana

Written by Richard B. Mahase in New York

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US-based Guyanese philanthropist George Subraj sponsors...

-Several cases listed

NEW YORK, USA: A team of medical professionals including several cardiologists and surgeons departed JFK International Airport, USA, last night for a historic first round of Pediatric Heart Surgeries to be conducted at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), in collaboration with the Caribbean Heart Institute (CHI), according to popular US-based Guyanese philanthropist, George Subraj.



George Subraj

Minister within the Ministry of Health, Dr. Bheri Ramsarran, in an invited comment via telephone said that the Guyanese medical communities as well as potential patients are really looking forward to this visit. He further added that he was extremely proud of the professionalism with which the team worked in coordinating such a large team and that medical history will be created in Guyana when this week of screenings and surgeries begin.

During the team's visit from today to next Friday, eleven patients, including a Trinidadian, have already been indentified for surgery, nine of whom are below fifteen years. This volume of patients for a single visit from an overseas team is rare, especially when surgery of this nature is not the norm, said George, President of Zara Realty Holdings, Corp.

Subraj, who initiated Guyana's first Kidney Transplant almost two years ago, said he has been in contact regularly with Dr. Gary Stephens of the CHI with the hope of having surgery of this nature done at home. "It has become a huge undertaking and a financial nightmare when our children, babies if I may, have to travel to far corners of the earth for those life-saving surgeries. I hope with this team's visit we can open the door wide enough to have the procedure done at home whenever it is required," said the grand sponsor of the distinguished team.

The members of the medical team are: Joanne Mora (Cardiologist), Shubhika Srivastava (Cardiologist), Sheel Vatsia (Surgeon), Jeanine Lutgen (Assistant Surgeon), Robert Stroud (Perfusionist/Heart Lung Machine), Trace Baker (Perfusionist/Heart lung machine), Tatyana Rozenhal (Anesthesiologist), Ingrid Hollinger (Anesthesiologist), Marietta Africano Sabido (Intensive Care Nurse), Colsie Elaine Myrie (Intensive Care Nurse), Marlene Kuanken Juanico (Intensive Care Nurse), Margie Enriquez Lutian (Intensive Care Nurse), Maureen Fitzpatrick Gilroy (OR Scrub Tech)

Some of the potential patients listed are: Nirvanie Brown, 11, Keandra Daniels, 1, Griffith Shahel, 11, Jenen Henry, 1, Mohabir Aiden, Mohabir Naheem (T&T), Bharat Narine, 9, Nalini Persaud, 14, Nicholas Persaud, Burnette Odette, 36, and Avinash Soman, 23.

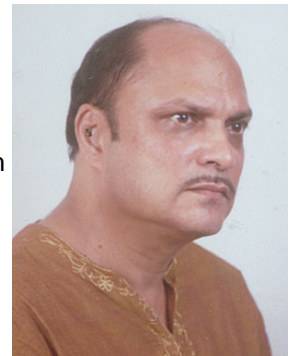
Minister within the Ministry of Health, Dr. Bheri Ramsarran

"I am extremely happy that the members of this medical team have consented for the trip," stated Mr. Subraj. "They are valuable employees of the prestigious Long Island Jewish Hospital and with Dr. Stephens intervention and association, have all agreed to visit our beautiful Guyana voluntarily. This will be a first for the GPHC and the CHI. Both these institutions have come a far way in cardiac care. This is reflected in the great reports we receive here, abroad, and I am only hoping that this association is just as successful."

Dr. Stephens revealed that there are a number of children with congenital heart disease. While this number may not be significant, he cautions, it is still alarming based upon the population density of the country. The cardiologists who travels regularly between Guyana and the US, pioneered Guyana's first open heart surgery in October, 2007, and has since expanded the service to include Stent Placement, Cardiac Catheterization and Balloon Angioplasty.

George also said that it was recently brought to his attention by Team Coordinator Mr. Lake Persaud, that another child, Udesch Ragubar, 2, of East Berbice, has a heart defect and was in need of urgent surgery. "This I have asked Dr. Stephens to look into, also," he said.

"The charts of the patients were all forwarded to the team at the Long Island Jewish Hospital and with consultation with Dr. Stephens, these are the names released. There are, from what I understand, some other cases that still cannot be handled in Guyana, according to Dr. Stephens. But with the team there, we will try to get a closer look and maybe source help elsewhere for now. We are hoping those patients show up with their chart. They are our





Dr. Gary Stephens

children and it is in our hands to help give them a healthy future,” Mr. Subraj said.

“Having said that, I have always applauded the commitment and sacrifice of former First Lady Varshanie Jagdeo. She is the life line of hope for children with very serious conditions and with the kind of professionals headed there I am hoping rewarding linkages can be established. After all, it is for the health of the child,” continues George.

Asked about his relationship with the GPHC, George said it is excellent. “During our time there for the Kidney transplant surgery, we received tremendous support from both Minister Leslie Ramsammy and the personnel of the institution. Professionalism was displayed at every level and this inspired the visiting doctors to take back pleasant memories of Guyana.

“And we are indeed looking forward for the same support. This time our team is larger and there are more patients...so it is very important that we all –visitors and home team – work together for success,” Subraj added.